THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Bio-diesel, a diesel fuel substitute, can be made from vegetable oils (both edible and non-edible) and animal fats. Studies have been undertaken in R&D and academic institutions to explore the possibility of production of bio-diesel from non-edible oils like *Jatropha curcas* (Ratan jot) and *Pongamia* (Karanj), and these have been found to be suitable feedstock for the production of bio-diesel.

The Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal Ministry to implement the proposed National Mission on Bio-diesel, which *inter alia*, envisages large scale plantation of *Jatropha Curcas* (Ratan Jot). The Detailed Project Report for the proposed National Mission on Bio-diesel, which was referred by the Ministry of Rural Development to the Planning Commission, has not yet received all clearances and approvals which are a prerequisite for deciding upon any policy regarding bio-diesel.

However, for providing marketing support to bio-diesel for use as trasnsportation fuel through blending with diesel, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has issued a Statement on Bio-diesel Purchase Policy, which comes into effect on 1.1.2006. The policy identifies 20 purchase centres of the public sector oil marketing companies at which these companies will purchase bio-diesel which satisfies the prescribed Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) specifications from those bio-diesel manufacturers who get registered with the oil marketing companies after satisfying the technical and other credentials. The initial price at which the oil marketing companies will purchase bio-diesel is Rs. 25 per litre. This prices can be reviewed by the oil marketing companies every six months. Depending upon felt need and preparedness, the oil companies could also open more purchase centres.

Development of places to attract foreign tourists

†*188. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the year-wise increase in the number of foreign tourists in the country during last three years;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether Government are aware that still there are many places left where development would automatically attract the tourist and people will get jobs;

(c) whether Government have identified such places;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the concrete arrangements made by Government to avoid any untoward incident with the foreign or the Indian tourists?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Foreign tourist arrivals to India during the last three years 2002, 2003 and 2004 were 2.38 million, 2.73 million and 3.37 million respectively.

(b) With India's vast bounties of nature; its great treasures of art, architecture and philosophical thought; its rich cultural heritage; its rural countryside and wildlife, and practices of Yoga, Siddha, etc. spread across different States, there is immense tourism potential in the country. With the development of tourism infrastructure, and increase in tourist visits, there is scope for creation of more jobs.

(c) and (d) Development and promotion of tourist spots/places is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments concerned. The Ministry of Tourism, however, provides funds to the State Governments for specific projects which are prioritized in consultation with them every year under various schemes. Further, in order to assist the State Governments in identifying various places of tourist interest, and their systematic development in States, the Ministry of Tourism has commissioned 20 year Perspective Plans for various States which, *inter-alia*, have provided an action plan for development of identified places.

(e) For the safety and security of tourists, the Government has deployed Police at the International Airport and important tourist centres. They have also been given orientation training in tourism related aspects. The Ministry of Tourism has advised all the State Governments/UTs to deploy Tourist Police at all important tourist centres/destinations, and many States have deployed the Tourist Police Force in one form or another.